International Seabed Authority ISBA/24/LTC/2

Legal and Technical Commission

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Report on the status of the contracts for exploration

Status of contracts for exploration in the Area

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report provides updated information on the status of contracts for exploration in the Area. Contracts currently pertain to each of the three mineral resources for which the International Seabed Authority has adopted regulations on prospecting and exploration. These are polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts. The information provided herein covers the period until 31 December 2017.

2. As at 31 December 2017, 27 contracts for exploration had entered into force, of which 17 were for polymetallic nodules, 6 were for polymetallic sulphides and 4 were for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts. For each mineral resource, a complete list, containing the name of the contractor, the sponsoring State(s), if applicable, the general location of the exploration area and the dates of entry into force and expiry of each contract, is provided in the annex to the present document.

3. A contract for exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts, relating to an application for approval of a plan of work for exploration submitted by the Government of the Republic of Korea, was approved by the Council at the twenty-second session, in 2016, and will be signed before the start of the twenty-fourth session. A contract with the Government of Poland for exploration for polymetallic sulphides, relating to a plan of work for exploration approved by the Council at the twenty-third session, was signed in Warsaw in October 2017 but, owing to technical reasons, had not entered into force as at 31 December 2017.

4. In respect of six applications for a five-year extension of the exploration contracts approved by the Council at the twenty-second session, extension agreements have been signed with all contractors concerned, namely Interoceanmetal Joint Organization, the Government of the Republic of Korea, China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association, Deep Ocean Resources Development Co. Ltd., Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer and

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Yuzhmorgeologiya. Information on the adjusted expiration date of the relevant contracts is contained in the annex.

5. In respect of the application by the Government of India for a five-year extension of its exploration contract that was approved by the Council at the twenty-third session, the extension agreement is expected to be signed by the end of February 2018.

6. The Commission is invited to take note of the present report.

Annex

Status of contracts for exploration

A. Contracts for exploration for polymetallic nodules

	Contractor	*Date of entry into force*	*Sponsoring State(s)*	*General location of the exploration area*	*Date of expiry*
1	Interoceanmetal Joint Organization	29 March 2001 29 March 2016[a]	Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechia, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovakia	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	28 March 2016 28 March 2021
2	Yuzhmorgeologiya	29 March 2001 29 March 2016[a]	Russian Federation	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	28 March 2016 28 March 2021
3	Government of the Republic of Korea	27 April 2001 27 April 2016[a]	–	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	26 April 2016 26 April 2021
4	China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association	22 May 2001 22 May 2016[a]	China	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	21 May 2016 21 May 2021
5	Deep Ocean Resources Development Co. Ltd.	20 June 2001 20 June 2016[a]	Japan	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	19 June 2016 19 June 2021
6	Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer	20 June 2001 20 June 2016[a]	France	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	19 June 2016 19 June 2021
7	Government of India	25 March 2002 25 March 2017[b]	–	Central Indian Ocean Basin	24 March 2017 24 March 2022
8	Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources	19 July 2006	Germany	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	18 July 2021
9	Nauru Ocean Resources Inc.	22 July 2011	Nauru	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone (reserved area)	21 July 2026
10	Tonga Offshore Mining Limited	11 January 2012	Tonga	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone (reserved area)	10 January 2027
11	Global Sea Mineral Resources NV	14 January 2013	Belgium	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	13 January 2028
12	UK Seabed Resources Ltd.	8 February 2013	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	7 February 2028

	Contractor	*Date of entry into force*	*Sponsoring State(s)*	*General location of the exploration area*	*Date of expiry*
13	Marawa Research and Exploration Ltd.	19 January 2015	Kiribati	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone (reserved area)	18 January 2030
14	Ocean Mineral Singapore Pte. Ltd.	Signed in Kingston on 15 January 2015 and in Singapore on 22 January 2015	Singapore	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone (reserved area)	21 January 2030
15	UK Seabed Resources Ltd.	29 March 2016	United Kingdom	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	28 March 2031
16	Cook Islands Investment Corporation	15 July 2016	Cook Islands	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone (reserved area)	14 July 2031
17	China Minmetals Corporation	12 May 2017	China	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone (reserved area)	11 May 2032

[a] Five-year extension of contract granted at the twenty-second session (2016).
[b] Five-year extension of contract granted at the twenty-third session (2017).

B. Contracts for exploration for polymetallic sulphides

	Contractor	*Date of entry into force*	*Sponsoring State(s)*	*General location of the exploration area*	*Date of expiry*
1	China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association	18 November 2011	China	South-West Indian Ridge	17 November 2026
2	Government of the Russian Federation	29 October 2012	–	Mid-Atlantic Ridge	28 October 2027
3	Government of the Republic of Korea	24 June 2014	–	Central Indian Ocean	23 June 2029
4	Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer	18 November 2014	France	Mid-Atlantic Ridge	17 November 2029
5	Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources	6 May 2015	Germany	Central Indian Ridge and South-East Indian Ridge	5 May 2030

	Contractor	*Date of entry into force*	*Sponsoring State(s)*	*General location of the exploration area*	*Date of expiry*
6	Government of India	26 September 2016	–	Indian Ocean Ridge	25 September 2031
7	Government of Poland	Not yet in force	–	Mid-Atlantic Ridge	

C. Contracts for exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts

	Contractor	*Date of entry into force*	*Sponsoring State(s)*	*General location of the exploration area*	*Date of expiry*
1	Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation	27 January 2014	Japan	Western Pacific Ocean	26 January 2029
2	China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association	29 April 2014	China	Western Pacific Ocean	28 April 2029
3	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation	10 March 2015	–	Magellan Mountains in the Pacific Ocean	9 March 2030
4	Companhia de Pesquisa de Recursos Minerais S.A.	9 November 2015	Brazil	Rio Grande Rise in the South Atlantic Ocean	8 November 2030
5	Government of the Republic of Korea	To be signed	–	East of the Northern Mariana Islands in the Pacific Ocean	